

## **DETERMINATION AND FINDING FOR A SOURCE PROCUREMENT**

**AGENCY:** District of Columbia Public Schools  
Office of Teaching and Learning  
**CAPTION:** Hochman Writing Revolution  
**PROPOSED CONTRACTOR:** The Writing Revolution  
**CONTRACT NO.** N/A

### **FINDINGS**

**1. AUTHORIZATION:**

D.C. Code 2-354.04.5 and 27 DCMR, Section 1304 and 1700

**2. MINIMUM NEED:**

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Office of Teaching and Learning, has an immediate need to procure the services of The Writing Revolution to provide professional development and consulting services to ten (10) schools: Washington Metropolitan High School, Eastern High School, Truesdell Education Campus, Johnson Middle School, Anne Beers ES, Brightwood EC, Stuart-Hobson MS, Wilson HS, Columbia Heights Education Campus MS and HS, and Randle Highlands ES during school year 2016.

**3. ESTIMATED COST:**

The estimated cost is \$299,999 from date of award through 6/30/16.

**3. FACTS WHICH JUSTIFY A SINGLE AVAILABLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT:**

The District of Columbia Public Schools Office of Human Capital, (DCPS) recommends partnering with Teach Plus to implement their successful Teacher Turnaround Teams (T3) initiative in DCPS schools beginning in 2013.

#### **Background and history of this vendor with DCPS**

In school year 2011-2012 DCPS became one of the first districts in the nation to roll out the new Common Core ELA standards K-12 as well as the Literacy Standards for teachers of history, science, and technical subjects. Each subsequent year, the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) has needed to develop or purchase additional curricular materials and professional development that align to the Common Core expectations. In school year 2013-14, DCPS turned our focus to the CCSS writing standards and have committed to providing DCPS educators with more resources to meet the demands of these standards.

Following the publication of *The Atlantic* article, "The Writing Revolution" (2012) about the dramatic turn-around of New Dorp High School, a failing public high school in New York City, OTL investigated the school and the root of its success. Faced with closure, the school's principal placed a singular focus on teaching the basics of analytic writing, every day, in virtually every class. According to the article, "What followed was an extraordinary blossoming of student

potential, across nearly every subject—one that has made New Dorp a model for educational reform.”

The New Dorp School’s students dramatically improved their pass rates on New York State’s English Regents test (from 67 percent in June 2009 to 89 percent in 2011). Pass rates also jumped on the global history exam, rising from 64 to 75 percent. As a result the school has dramatically reduced its Regents-repeater “test prep” classes (from five classes of 35 students to two classes of 20 students).

The force behind New Dorp School’s writing program, Dr. Judith Hochman, has agreed to offer the same writing professional development directly to four schools in the district: Washington Metropolitan High School, Eastern High School, Truesdell Education Campus, and Hart Middle School. Her goal: to replicate New Dorp’s success in the district. DCPS students struggle to translate their thoughts into coherent, well-crafted written pieces, and this inability impedes their growth across subject areas. Hochman’s approach places an intense focus across ELA, science, and social studies classrooms on teaching the skills fundamental to analytical writing.

In SY 13-14 and SY 14-15, DCPS partnered with Dr. Judith Hochman to provide CCSS-aligned writing professional development directly to ten schools in the district: Washington Metropolitan High School, Eastern High School, Truesdell Education Campus, Johnson Middle School, Anne Beers ES, Brightwood EC, Stuart-Hobson MS, Wilson HS, Columbia Heights Education Campus MS and HS, and Randle Highlands ES. These schools have committed to adopting Dr. Hochman’s model and thus have placed an intense focus across ELA, science, and social studies classrooms on teaching the skills fundamental to analytical writing.

DCPS is now in the third year of work with Dr. Hochman and we are finding promising results as we work with Dr. Hochman to analyze students’ writing and teachers’ increased knowledge and skill. For SY 15-16 The Hochman writing method is being implemented in the eleven schools: Tubman ES, Truesdell EC, Brightwood EC, Moten ES, Garrison ES, Drew ES, Johnson MS, Eastern HS, Stuart-Hobson MS, Columbia Heights Education Campus MS and HS, and Anne Beers ES.

### **Hochman’s Approach**

A sound writing curriculum stresses narrative and expository writing skills, with an emphasis on the latter. Because teachers have limited time for such instruction, Hochman’s approach focuses on forming a solid foundation in the skills most needed for academic assignments. It assumes that writing and thinking are tightly linked, thus writing instruction should, above all, help students enhance clarity and precision as they structure their ideas. A good writer must bring to bear a command of linguistic knowledge, world knowledge, and social cognition (an understanding of, and an empathy for, the audience). The Hochman Method is as much about reading comprehension, background knowledge, and the organization of a writer’s thinking as it is about writing itself.

In many schools, writing instruction is a haphazard affair—In middle and high school, students are asked to write book reports or research papers or essays but are given little or no guidance on how to proceed. Feedback is often too vague to benefit students and provide them with a useful framework for improving their work.

Teaching students how to construct complex sentences will enhance their syntactic control, their ability to revise, and their reading comprehension. When students are given an appropriate structure for writing essays and doing research, their thinking becomes more organized and they are able to express themselves with greater fluency and clarity. Note taking and summarizing are embedded in the writing instruction since these skills are necessary for extracting the most important information from written text or oral presentations.

Hochman's *Teaching Basic Writing Skills* program, together with hands-on workshops, will provide teachers with flexible, evidence-based strategies for written language in all content areas and grades and can be adapted for students of varied abilities. Without explicit writing instruction, students cannot fulfill their academic potential. Experience suggests that teaching students to write actually can unlock their intelligence.

**The Proposed Vendor's Unique Qualifications:**

The Writing Revolution is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to training teachers in underserved school districts to help their students to think clearly and to reflect that thinking in their writing.

The Writing Revolution brings a proven, cost-effective and evidence-based instructional methodology to teachers at educational institutions across the country. The Writing Revolution's strategy, the Hochman Method, enables students to master the most essential skills needed to produce coherent, unified, structured writing. In turn, these writing skills enable students to become better readers, to communicate more effectively and, most importantly, to elevate their thinking. Their method is a flexible, cost effective program that teachers and instructional leaders can employ to ensure that students at all levels are able to build the skills they need to clearly express their ideas in writing.

The Hochman Method is effective for students in elementary school and a proven method for teaching the foundational skills to students in middle school and high school.

In light of the above findings a sole source award is in the best interest of DCPS and would be the most efficient and cost-effective procurement method.

**CERTIFICATION BY THE DCPS PROGRAM OFFICE:**

I hereby certify that the above findings are correct and the anticipated cost to DCPS is fair and reasonable.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Office of Teaching and Learning

**CERTIFICATION AND DETERMINATION**

Based on the above certified findings in accordance cited authority, I hereby determine that it is not feasible or practical to invoke the competitive bidding process under Section 402 or 403 of the District of Columbia Procurement Practices Reform Act of 2010 (D.C. Law 18-371; DC Code 2-354 and 27 DCMR 1304 and 1700.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Chief Procurement Officer